

NOTORIOUS 1950s EC COMICS!



NO. 6
DEC



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CANADA

SHOCK

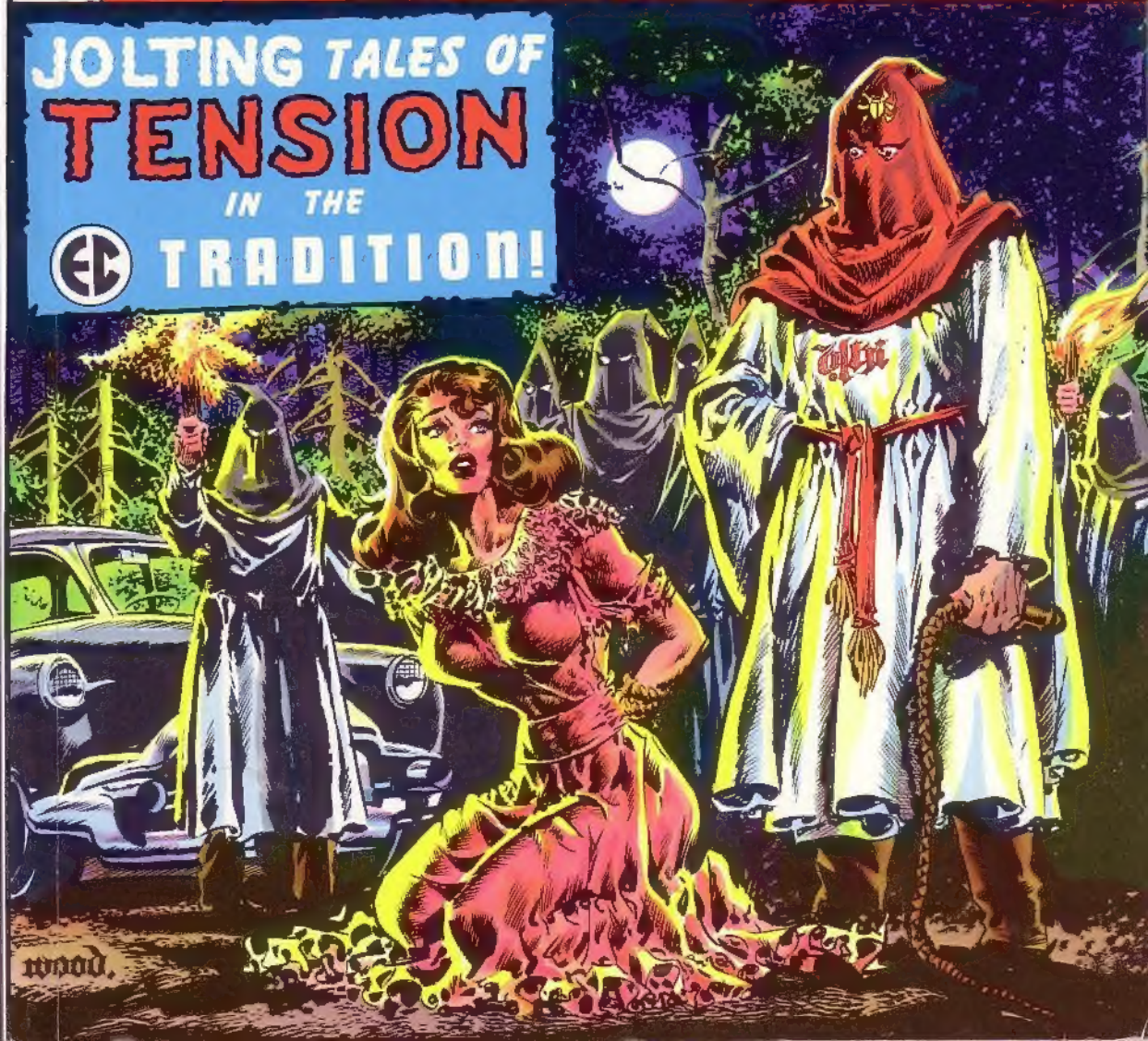
SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION

IN THE



TRADITION!



BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE SHOCKING FINAL
TWIST TO THIS GRIPPING TALE OF TENSION...

DEAD RIGHT!

**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**



CATHY DRAINED THE LAST DROP OF TEA FROM HER CUP AND STARED DOWN AT THE TINY TEA LEAVES THAT FLECKED THE BOTTOM! THEN SHE GLANCED ABOUT THE TINY GYPSY TEAROOM! MADAME VORNA NODDED TO HER...

YOU WANT ME TO READ YOUR
FORTUNE IN THE *TEA LEAVES*,
MY DEAR? I WILL BE WITH YOU
IN A MOMENT!

OKAY...I'LL
WAIT!

-KLEIN

GATHY SAT BACK AND LIT A CIGARETTE! THE SMOKE CURLED UP LAZILY, DRIFTING TOWARD THE CEILING OF THE PICTURESQUE TEAROOM! SOON MADAME VORNA WOULD BE READING GATHY'S TEA LEAVES ONCE MORE! GATHY BELIEVED IN MADAME VORNA... SHE HAD TO! **FOUR TIMES** SHE'D READ GATHY'S FORTUNE **ACCURATELY!** GATHY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT **FIRST TIME**...

YOU WORK FOR A LIVING... AN OFFICE CLERK! YOU DO NOT TYPE VERY WELL, DO YOU?

SAY! THAT'S PRETTY GOOD!

ALL YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE DESIRED TO MARRY WELL... TO MARRY FOR MONEY! BUT YOUR CHANCE HAS NEVER COME, SO YOU KEEP ON WORKING... AND HOPING!

SAY, HONEY! YOU'RE PRETTY SHARP! GO ON!

TODAY, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR JOB!

AW, CAN IT, SIS! MY BOSS IS OUT OF TOWN, SO I COULDN'T GET FIRED TODAY ANYWAY! WHICH REMINDS ME! I'D BETTER GET BACK! MY LUNCH HOUR IS ALMOST UP!



YES! GATHY REMEMBERED THAT FIRST DAY WELL! SHE'D GONE BACK TO THE OFFICE AND...

WHY, MR. CLAYTON! I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU BACK TODAY!

IS THIS HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF THINGS WHILE I'M GONE, MISS FINCH?



I DON'T UNDERSTAND MR. CLAYTON!

THE ELEVATOR MAN TOLD ME YOU WENT OUT TO LUNCH AT TWELVE! YOU KNOW THAT WE ALLOW ONLY ONE HOUR FOR LUNCH!



OF COURSE I KNOW THAT! SO WHAT?

SO YOU'RE FIRED, MISS FINCH! IT'S ONE TWENTY-FIVE!



THE CLOCK! THE CLOCK IN THAT LITTLE GYPSY TEAROOM HAD BEEN HALF AN HOUR SLOW! THAT GYPSY KNEW IT! GATHY STORMED IN...

THE CLOCK! HALF AN HOUR SLOW! OH! SO IT IS! I DIDN'T NOTICE! BUT YOU FORGET, MISS! I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOUR EMPLOYER WAS OUT OF TOWN! HOW COULD I TELL HE'D GONE BACK, UNEXPECTEDLY?

THAT... THAT'S RIGHT!



AND THAT SECOND TIME! CATHY'D STOPPED IN WHILE JOB HUNTING! THE GYPSY'D EXAMINED HER GUP AND ANNOUNCED...

YOU ARE STILL OUT OF A JOB! YOUR SAVINGS ARE RUNNING LOW! BUT WAIT! DO NOT WORRY! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY IN YOUR LIFE SOMEDAY! AND A MAN! AND... OH... I SEE A JOB... TODAY!



SHE'D BEEN RIGHT AGAIN! THAT WAS THE DAY CATHY'D LANDED HER JOB IN THE RESTAURANT...

YOU WERE RIGHT, MADAME VORNA! I DID GET A JOB TODAY!

I SEE! YOU... YOU CARRY SOMETHING! ER... FOOD! YOU ARE A WAITRESS!



YOU'RE ASTOUNDING, MADAM VORNA! TELL ME! DO YOU SEE ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THAT DOUGH... AND THAT GUY?

YES! THE MAN... YOU WILL MARRY HIM! BUT, WAIT! HE WILL NOT BE RICH AT THE TIME OF YOUR MARRIAGE!



FAT CHANCE! I'M NOT MARRYIN' ANY JERK UNLESS HE'S LOADED ALREADY! ER... IS IT... LOVE?

HE WILL INHERIT THE MONEY... INHERIT IT FROM SOMEONE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM! SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED! WAIT! I SEE SOMEONE ASKING YOU FOR DATE TOMORROW! A LARGE MAN...



MADAME VORNA HAD BEEN RIGHT FOR THE THIRD TIME! THE NEXT DAY, CATHY WAS ASKED FOR A DATE! BUT SHE TOOK ONE LOOK AT HIM, AND...

NO THANKS, BUSTER! I'M BUSY TONIGHT!

THEN HOW ABOUT TOMORROW NIGHT, CUTE STUFF!



AND THAT NIGHT, CATHY'D GONE BACK TO MADAM VORNA...

YOU WERE RIGHT, HONEY! I DID GET ASKED FOR A DATE T'DAY! WHEN YOU SAID A LARGE MAN, YOU WERE C'RECT! THIS GUY WAS DISGUSTING! A FAT SLOB! NOW, WHAT ABOUT MY FUTURE HUSBAND? YOU SAID HE'D INHERIT MONEY!

YES! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY! BUT WAIT! SOON AFTER HE INHERITS THIS MONEY, HE WILL DIE... VIOLENTLY!



YOU MEAN I'M GOING TO BE A WIDOW? A RICH WIDOW?

NOW I SEE THE LARGE MAN AGAIN! HE IS SITTING AT A TABLE! HE... HE IS ASKING YOU FOR ANOTHER DATE!



THAT'D BEEN THAT VERY AFTERNOON! THE OBESE INDIVIDUAL HAD COME INTO THE RESTAURANT AGAIN! CATHY COULDN'T STAND HIM! THE ODOR OF HIS PERSPIRATION HAD SICKENED HER! WHEN HE'D SPOKEN, CATHY'D CAUGHT A WHIFF OF HIS FOUL BREATH...

O'MON, BABY! GIMME A BREAK! WHAT NIGHT AIN'T YUH BUSY?

I'M BUSY EVERY NIGHT, AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, BUSTER!



THE CIGARETTE SMOKE CURLED UPWARD TO THE CEILING OF THE GYPSY TEAROOM! SUDDENLY, MADAM VORNA STOOD OVER CATHY...

I AM READY NOW, MY DEAR! LET ME HAVE YOUR CUP!

HERE! AND FORGET THAT HORRIBLE FAT GRUMB, HUH! TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT FELLER I'M GONNA MARRY! THE GUY THAT'S GONNA INHERIT ALL THE DOUGH!



MADAM VORNA TOOK CATHY'S CUP...

AH! I SEE THE LARGE MAN DID ASK YOU FOR A DATE, AND YOU WERE RUDE TO HIM...

IF YOU CAME WITHIN SIX FEET OF HIM, YOU'D BE RUDE TOO! WHEW!



BUT HE... THE LARGE MAN... HE IS THE ONE YOU WILL MARRY! HE IS THE ONE WHO WILL INHERIT THE LARGE SUM OF MONEY SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED!

OH, NO!

BUT SHORTLY AFTERWARD, HE WILL DIE... VIOLENTLY! THAT IS WHAT I SEE!

SHORTLY AFTERWARD, EH?



THAT NIGHT, CATHY THOUGHT IT ALL OVER... JUST WHAT MADAME VORNA HAD READ IN THE TEA LEAVES.

SHE'S BEEN RIGHT FOUR TIMES ALREADY! AND SHE DOES SEE THE FAT SLOB DYING SOON AFTER HE INHERITS ALL THAT DOUGH! VIOLENTLY, SHE SAID! MAYBE HE'LL GET KILLED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! AND IF I'M MARRIED TO HIM...



SO CATHY STEELED HERSELF... HID HER REVULSION... AND...

HELLO, BABY! BUSY TONIGHT AGAIN?

TONIGHT? WHY... WHY, NO! TONIGHT I'M NOT... CHOKED... BUSY!



CATHY ALMOST THREW UP WHEN HE TOOK HER HAND IN HIS GREASY BLOATED PAWS...

HOW 'BOUT GOIN' OUT WITH ME T'NIGHT, CUTIE?

ALL RIGHT!

...CHOKER...

IT WAS HORRIBLE! THE EVENING WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE! CHARLIE MARNO WAS HIS NAME! HE TOOK CATHY TO A MOVIE! THEY SAT THERE TOGETHER IN THE DARK... CATHY RETCHING WITH EACH BREATH SHE TOOK...

S'A GOOD PITCHER, EH, CATHY?

Y-YES, CHARLIE!

AND AFTERWARDS, DANCING WITH THE LUMBERING OX IN A CHEAP NIGHT-CLUB...

HAVIN' A GOOD TIME, CATHY?

GREAT... CHARLIE!

CATHY WAS SICK TO HER STOMACH ALL THAT NIGHT! THE NEXT DAY, AS SOON AS SHE COULD GET AWAY, SHE RUSHED TO MADAME VORNA...

I'VE GOT TO BE SURE, MADAME VORNA! IT'S GOT TO BE WORTH IT! YOU SAID IT WAS A LOT OF DOUGH HE'D INHERIT! HOW MUCH?

HIS INITIALS! I SEE HIS INITIALS! G.M.!

CHARLES MARNO! YES! THAT'S RIGHT! CAN YOU SEE HOW MUCH MONEY?

I SEE... I SEE TWENTY... NO... TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

CATHY WAS SURE NOW! FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, SHE COULD STAND ANYTHING! EVEN DISGUSTING CHARLIE MARNO! THEN, SEVERAL WEEKS OF DATING LATER... SEVERAL HORRIBLE WEEKS OF BEING NEAR HIM... CHARLIE PROPOSED...

I AIN'T GOT MUCH NOW, CATHY! BUT I GOT GOOD PROSPECTS! WILL YUH MARRY ME?

CHARLIE? DO YOU HAVE ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU... A BROTHER... OR AN AUNT... WHO IS... ER... RICH?

MY UNCLE'S GOT A FACTORY! HE'S WORTH SOMETHIN'! BUT I WOULDN'T ASK HIM FOR ANYTHING!

OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, CHARLIE! YOU WON'T HAVE TO ASK HIM! YES... CHARLIE! I'LL MARRY YOU!

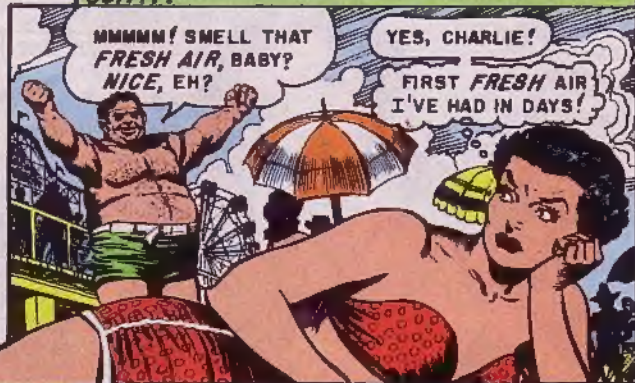
FOR A MOMENT...FOR A MISERABLE SICKENING MOMENT...WHEN CHARLIE TOOK HER INTO HIS ARMS AND PLANTED HIS FLABBY LIPS UPON HERS, CATHY THOUGHT OF CHUCKING THE WHOLE DEAL! BUT "TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS" BOOMED IN HER REELING BRAIN...

SO SHE WENT THROUGH WITH IT! SHE MARRIED HIM! THEY WENT ON A CHEAP HONEYMOON...TO A TWO-BIT RESORT HOTEL NEAR THE SEA-SHORE! CATHY WAS ALMOST TOO ASHAMED TO BE SEEN WITH CHARLIE! WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE IN A BATHING SUIT...



OH, BABY! BABY!
WE'RE GONNA BE
SO HAPPY!

SURE, CHARLIE!
CHOKES... SURE!



MMMMM! SMELL THAT
FRESH AIR, BABY?
NICE, EH?

YES, CHARLIE!

FIRST FRESH AIR
I'VE HAD IN DAYS!

AND AFTER THE HONEYMOON, CHARLIE AND CATHY MOVED INTO A SHABBY FURNISHED ROOM! THE DAYS AND NIGHTS CRAWLED BY...PAINFULLY! CATHY WAITED...

BY THE WAY, CHARLIE! HAVE
YOU HEARD FROM YOUR
UNCLE RECENTLY? YOU
KNOW... THE RICH ONE!

HUH? WHO? OH, HIM!
NAN! WHY SHOULD
I HEAR FROM HIM?
HE'S OUT WEST...
WITH HIS FAMILY!



FAMILY? YOU DIDN'T
TELL ME!

YOU DIDN'T ASK ME!
SAY, WHAT'S THE
DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?



A MONTH PASSED! THEN TWO!
CATHY WENT BACK TO THE GYPSY
TEAROOM...

TELL ME, MADAME
VORNA! WHEN WILL HE
INHERIT THE MONEY?
TELL ME! I CAN'T
STAND IT MUCH
LONGER!

SOON!
I SEE IT
COMING...
SOON!
AND THEN...



...HIS
DEATH!

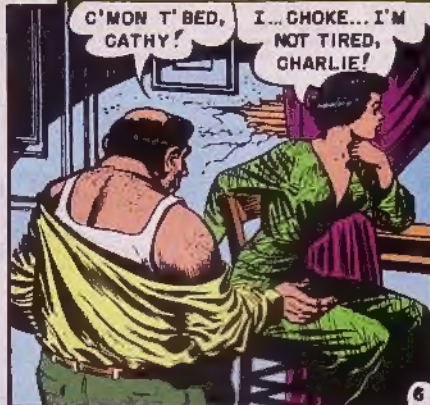
THANKS, MADAME
VORNA! I'LL
BE SEEING YOU!



WITH MADAME VORNA'S ASSUR-
ANCE, CATHY WENT BACK TO
LIVING WITH CHARLIE WITH
RENEWED DETERMINATION...

C'MON T' BED,
CATHY!

I... CHOKES... I'M
NOT TIRED,
CHARLIE!



AND THEN IT HAPPENED! CATHY'D STOPPED IN AT A LARGE CAFETERIA IN TOWN FOR A BITE TO EAT! AS SHE TOOK HER CHECK AND MOVED DOWN THE LINE OF COUNTERS...



S'FUNNY! I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELIN' THAT EVERYBODY'S WATCHIN' ME!



WHAT'LL IT BE, MA'AM?

I'LL HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE...

HOLD IT!

LIGHTS!

SUDDENLY, THE CAFETERIA WAS FLOODED WITH BLINDING LIGHT! CATHY SPUN AROUND! EVERYONE WAS APPLAUDING! A MAN IN A BLUE SERGE SUIT STEPPED FORWARD, SMILING...

YOUNG LADY! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NETHERLANE CAFETERIA'S ONE MILLIONTH CUSTOMER! NOW IF YOU WILL GIVE US YOUR NAME...

C-CATHY! MRS. CATHY MARNO! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



SOMEONE HANDED THE SMILING MAN A RECTANGULAR PIECE OF PAPER...

MRS. MARNO! THE MANAGEMENT OF NETHERLANE CAFETERIA TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING YOU... OUR MILLIONTH CUSTOMER... WITH A CHECK... FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

GASP!



IT TOOK CATHY SEVERAL HOURS TO COMPOSE HERSELF! TOWARDS EVENING SHE CAME HOME... THE CASH IN HER POCKETBOOK...

CATHY? THAT YES...IT'S ME, YOU DISGUSTING PIG!



CATHY! SHE WAS WRONG, YOU FAT SLOB! MADAME VORNA WAS WRONG! IT WAS ME THAT GOT THE TWENTY-FIVE BRAND! NOT YOU!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CATHY? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I MEAN I'M LEAVING YOU, YOU CRUMB! I DON'T NEED YOU NOW! I'M WALKING OUT! THANKS FOR THREE MONTHS OF PERPETUAL NAUSEA!



CHARLIE MOVED QUICKLY...BARRING THE DOOR...

CATHY! YOU CAN'T WALK OUT ON ME! WE LOVE EACH OTHER!

LOVE! HAH! I CAN'T STAND BEING NEAR YOU!



CATHY!

GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU FILTHY, SMELLY...



CATHY!

CHARLIE! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!



IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU... NOBODY CAN!

CHARLIE! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!



CHARLIE BROUGHT THE GLEAMING KNIFE BLADE DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN! CATHY'S BAG FELL TO THE FLOOR... THE TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS SPILLING OUT, BLOTING OUT THE BLOOD...



IF I...UGH...CAN'T HAVE YOU... UGH...NO ONE... UGH...CAN...

ONE DAY, SHORTLY AFTER CATHY'S MURDER, A STIFF BREEZE SWEEP ACROSS A DISMAL CEMETERY, CARRYING WITH IT A FLUTTERING SHEET OF NEWSPAPER...

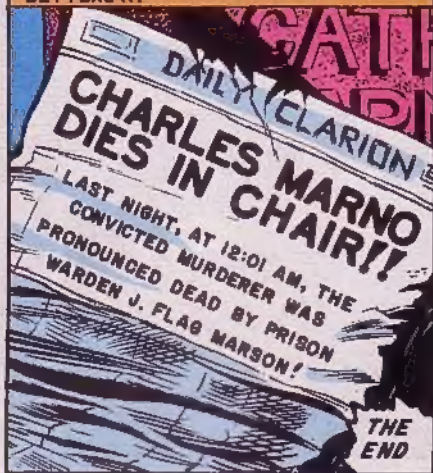


THE PAPER CAME TO REST BY A HEADSTONE PAID FOR WITH THE MONEY CHARLES MARNO HAD INHERITED...



...INHERITED FROM SOMEONE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM!

THE HEADLINES SCREAMED IN HUGE LETTERS...



THE END

HERE IS AN ELECTRIFYING STORY WITH SOLID IMPACT
IN ITS STARTLING CONCLUSION!

UNDER COVER!

THE WOMAN SCREAMED! ONE OF THEM PUSHED HER AND SHE FELL TO HER KNEES! ANOTHER LASHED HER ARMS BEHIND HER BACK! THEY STOOD AROUND HER... SILENTLY... SOMBERLY! NO ONE SPOKE! THEIR EYES BURNED FROM BEHIND THE HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS! THE WOMAN BEGAN TO SOB... WHIMPERING SOFTLY! THE TEARS STREAMED FROM HER EYES, DOWN HER BRUISED CHEEKS! SHE FELL TO HER KNEES... LOOKING FROM ONE HOODED FACE TO ANOTHER... PLEADINGLY...

AIN'T GONNA DO YOU NO GOOD, SUZY CARSON!

YOU NEED A LESSON!
YOU'RE GONNA GET IT!

WE'RE GONNA TEACH YOU NOT TO FOOL AROUND WITH THEM!

YOU'RE GONNA GET THE WHIPPIN' OF YOUR LIFE, SUZY CARSON!

**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE WOMAN FELL FACE DOWNWARD, HER BODY HEAVING WITH EACH GURGLED SOB! A VOICE CALLED OUT...

MAKE UP FOR THE GRAND MASTER!

THE BLACK-HOODED FORMS LOOKED UP FROM THE PROSTRATE WOMAN! A FIGURE APPEARED, MOVING INTO THE CIRCLE! HE WAS DRESSED DIFFERENTLY THAN THE OTHERS! HE WAS THEIR LEADER! HIS HOOD GLEAMED BLOOD-RED IN THE FIRELIGHT...

HITCH 'ER TO THE TREE! GIVE ME THE WHIP!

YES, GRAND MASTER!

TWO BLACK-HOODED FIGURES LIFTED THE SQUIRMING WOMAN AND DRAGGED HER TO A TREE! HER ARMS WERE UNTIED AND SWUNG AROUND ITS TRUNK...THEN RETIED ONCE AGAIN...

SHE IS READY, GRAND MASTER!

SUZY GARSON! FOR CONSORTING WITH...WITH THAT TRASH ELEMENT IN OUR TOWN, THE BLACK VIGILANTE SOCIETY SENTENCES YOU TO ONE-HUNDRED LASHES!

THE STRAP LASHED DOWNWARD ACROSS THE WOMAN'S BACK! THE COUNT BEGAN...

ONE...



THE BELT ROSE AND FELL AGAIN...

TWO...



SAMUEL MASTERS TURNED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT... A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPING OVER HIM...

THREE...

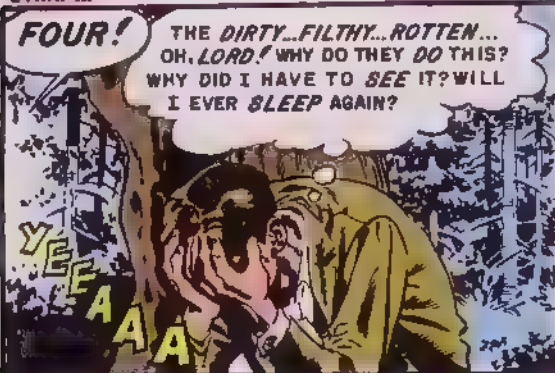
OH, LORD! LORD...



SAMUEL MASTERS SHOOK HIS HEAD! HE SLID DOWNWARD UNTIL HE SAT WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS! THE VOICE IN THE CLEARING DRIFTED TO HIS HIDING PLACE...ECHOING THE SHARP CRACK OF THE LEATHER STRAP...

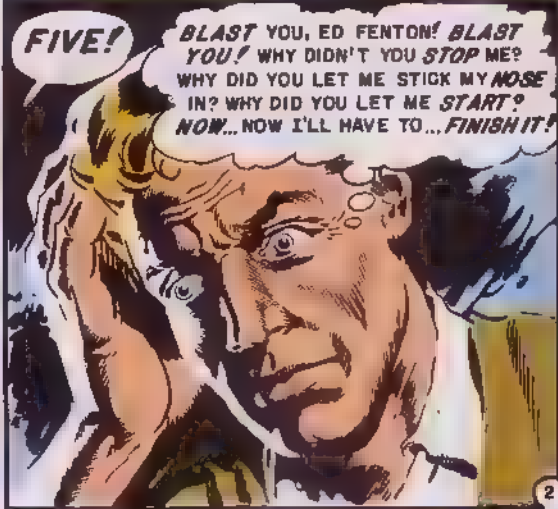
FOUR!

THE DIRTY...FILTHY...ROTTEN... OH, LORD! WHY DO THEY DO THIS? WHY DID I HAVE TO SEE IT? WILL I EVER SLEEP AGAIN?



FIVE!

BLAST YOU, ED FENTON! BLAST YOU! WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP ME? WHY DID YOU LET ME STICK MY NOSE IN? WHY DID YOU LET ME START? NOW...NOW I'LL HAVE TO...FINISH IT!



THE FALLING STRAP FADED! THE SOUNDS OF A BUSY NEWSPAPER OFFICE CAME UP! SAMUEL MASTERS WAS THINKING... THINKING ABOUT ED FENTON... THINKING ABOUT THE DAY HE'D VOLUNTEERED...

LOOK, SAM! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THOSE FLOGGINGS! ALL I'M SAYING IS, IT'S TROUBLE! KEEP OUT OF IT!

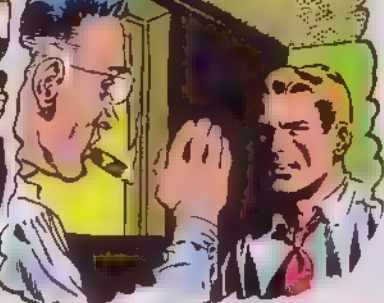
HOW CAN I, ED? THOSE HOODED GANGS ARE A MENACE!

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! THEY'RE A MENACE! ARE YOU GOING TO FIGHT THEM SINGLE-HANDED?

LOOK, ED! THEY'VE KID-NAPPED AND FLOGGED INNOCENT PEOPLE... GUILTY OF NOTHING MORE THAN PRACTICING DEMOCRACY! THE F.B.I. IS INTERESTED!

AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP THE F.B.I. CATCH 'EM? LITTLE DETECTIVE! JUNIOR G-MAN!

I'M GOING THERE FOR A STORY, SAM! I'M GOING TO EXPOSE THIS ROTTEN MESS! NOW, DO I GET YOUR OKAY... OR DON'T I?



OKAY! OKAY! BE A HERO! SEE WHERE IT GETS YOU! JUST ONE THING, SAM! BE CAREFUL, HUH? DON'T GET YOURSELF KILLED!

KILLED! KILLED! THE WORD EXPLODED IN SAM'S BRAIN! HE POKED HIS HEAD UP FROM HIS HIDING PLACE...

I SAID SHE'S DEAD! WE KILLED HER!

YOU SURE?

UNTIE HER!



A BLACK-HOODED FIGURE STEPPED FORWARD AND CUT THE ROPES THAT HELD THE WOMAN'S HANDS AROUND THE TREE! HER LIFELESS BODY SLID TO THE GROUND LIMPLY...



THE LEADER... THE RED-HOODED ONE... REMOVED HIS MASK AND KNELT TO LISTEN TO THE GIRL'S HEART...

SHE... SHE'S DEAD ALL RIGHT!



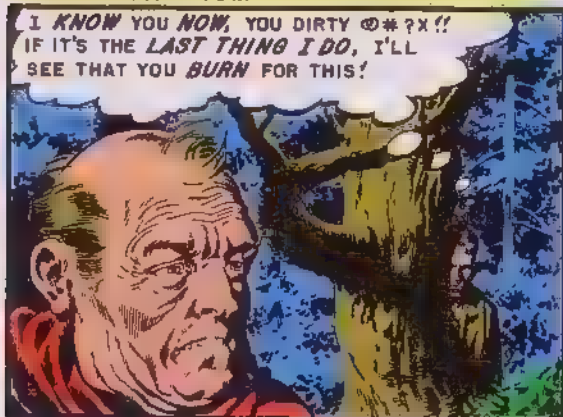
THE FIRELIGHT DANCED ON HIS PERSPIRING FACE...

LET'S GET HER BODY OUT OF HERE! C'MON!



IN HIS HIDING PLACE, SAM MASTERS LEANED FORWARD, STUDYING THE UNMASKED GANG LEADER... STUDYING HIS FACE ...

I KNOW YOU NOW, YOU DIRTY @*?X!! IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO, I'LL SEE THAT YOU BURN FOR THIS!



THE GLEARING WAS DESERTED! THE FIRE BURNED LOW! SAM CAME OUT FROM HIS HIDING PLACE, WATCHING THE LAST CAR'S TAIL LIGHT DISAPPEAR DOWN THE LONELY COUNTRY ROAD...

IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO...



A TWIG SNAPPED BEHIND SAM! HE SPUN AROUND! TWO HOODED FIGURES STARED AT HIM...

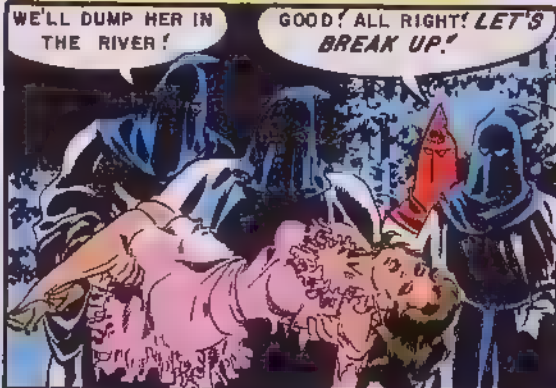
WHAT THE...? IT'S THAT REPORTER! GET 'IM!



THE BLACK-HOODED FIGURES MOVED OFF TOWARD THEIR CARS! THE LEADER SLIPPED HIS RED MASK BACK OVER HIS FACE ONCE MORE! TWO OF THE GANG LIFTED THE DEAD WOMAN'S BODY...

WE'LL DUMP HER IN THE RIVER!

GOOD! ALL RIGHT! LET'S BREAK UP!



SAM BEGAN TO RUN! BEHIND, THE ROBED FIGURES CRASHED THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH AFTER HIM...

HE MUSTA SEEN WHAT HAPPENED! WE'LL SHUT HIM UP!

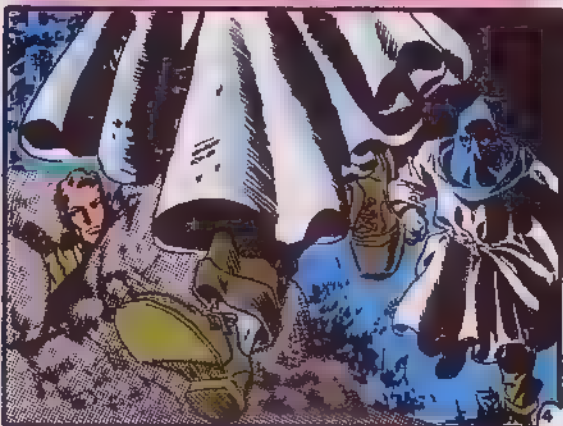


IT SEEMED TO SAM THAT HE'D BEEN RUNNING FOR HOURS WHEN HE FINALLY FELL TO THE GROUND, EXHAUSTED...

GOT TO... GASP... HIDE! IF THEY FIND ME...



SAM LAY IN THE UNDERBRUSH, SCARCELY BREATHING! THE TWO HOODED FIGURES PUFFED BY, CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH THEM...



AFTER A WHILE, THEY CAME BACK...
BREATHING HEAVILY...

STUPID! I TOL' YUH HE WENT THE OTHER WAY!
OKAY! SO WE LOST HIM! HE WON'T GET FAR! WE'LL TELL THE OTHERS!



HEY! DO YOU THINK HE SAW THE...THE GRAND MASTER'S FACE?



I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT! YOU MEAN WHEN HE TOOK OFF HIS MASK?

YEAH! HE'LL...GO TO THE F.B.I.! HE'LL IDENTIFY HIM!

IF HE SAW HIS FACE! WE CAN'T BE SURE! G'NON! LET'S GET BACK INTO TOWN!



IT WAS STARTING TO RAIN WHEN SAM MASTERS SLIPPED BACK INTO TOWN AND MADE HIS WAY TOWARD HIS HOTEL...

OH, OH! A CAR'S PARKED IN FRONT! MOTOR'S RUNNING! I CAN TELL FROM THE EXHAUST! THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME! I'VE GOT TO SNEAK IN... THROUGH THE BACK!



SAM DARTED DOWN AN ALLEY AND ACROSS THE REAR YARDS OF THE BUILDINGS THAT LINED THE MAIN STREET! FINALLY HE REACHED THE HOTEL'S BACK ENTRANCE...

WHO'S THAT? OH? MR MASTERS?

I'VE GOT TO MAKE A CALL! QUICK! GIVE ME THE PHONE!



THE CLERK HANDED SAM THE PHONE...

HELLO? HELLO, OPERATOR? GIVE ME THE F.B.I.! QUICKLY!

GOOD LORD! THE VIGILANTES!



THEY CROSSED THE LOBBY! THERE WERE FOUR OF THEM, THEIR EYES RIVETED ON SAM FROM THE HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS...

PUT DOWN THE PHONE, MISTER!

SO YOU WERE NOSIN' AROUND OUT AT THE CLEARING TONIGHT!

WE'LL TEACH REPORTERS TO NOSE AROUND!



SAM BACKED UP! THE HOODED FIGURES MOVED IN...

WHAT DID YOU SEE, BIG-SHOT? WHAT DID YOU SEE?

I SAW YOU KILL THAT WOMAN!

AND YOU WERE GONNA TELL THE F.B.I.?

WHAT ELSE DID YOU SEE, NOSEY?

DID YOU RECOGNIZE ANYBODY?

THE GRAND MASTER HAD HIS MASK OFF! DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?

NO! NO! I... I DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY'S FACE!



YOU SURE, NOSEY? YOU SURE?

I DIDN'T SEE... OOOOOOFF!

BE SURE, MISTER! BE SURE!



I DIDN'T... SOB... I TELL YOU! I... DIDN'T... UNNN66666!



THE FOUR OF THEM MOVED IN ON SAM... PUNCHING... KICKING... SWEARING...

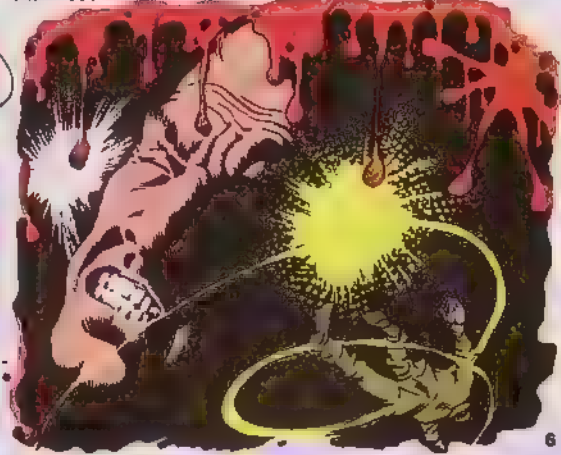
THIS'LL... UGGG... TEACH YOU...

MIND... UNHH... YOUR OWN... BUSINESS...

AND... UNN... DON'T UNN... TALK!



THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN ON SAM! THE BLACKNESS... AND THE PAIN...



THE FOG CLEARED! THE ROOM WAS BRIGHT! SAM LAY ON A HOSPITAL BED! A DOCTOR BENT OVER HIM! TWO MEN WHISPERED TOGETHER IN LOW TONES...

HE'S COMING TO, GENTLEMEN!

WH..WHERE AM I? WHAT... HAPPENED?

TAKE IT EASY, MR. MASTERS!

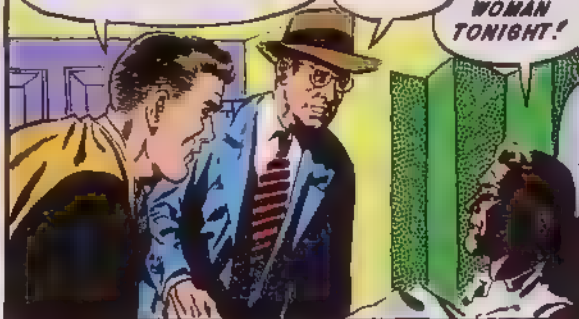


ONE OF THE MEN APPROACHED THE BED! HE FLASHED A BADGE...

YOU'VE BEEN OUT COLD FOR FOUR HOURS, MR. MASTERS! THEY GAVE YOU QUITE A BEATING! I'M FROM THE F.B.I.! YOU PUT IN A CALL TO US...

WHY DID THEY DO THIS, MR. MASTERS?

I SAW THEM! I SAW THEM KILL A WOMAN TONIGHT!



KILL A WOMAN! THEY FLOGGED HER TO DEATH! I SAW IT ALL!

DID YOU SEE WHO DID IT? DID YOU SEE ANY OF THEIR FACES?

THE GRAND MASTER! HE TOOK OFF HIS MASK! I CAN IDENTIFY HIM! HE WAS THE ONE THAT ACTUALLY DID IT!

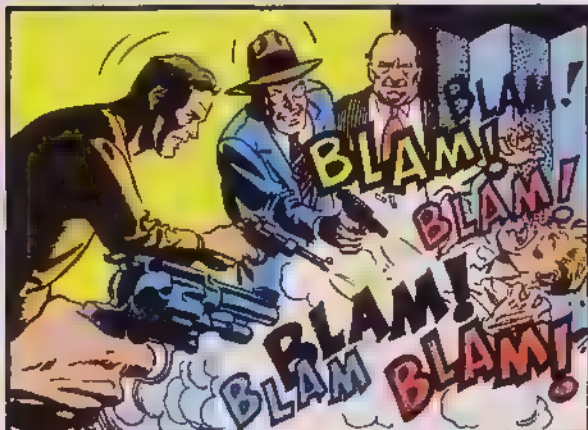
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN IDENTIFY HIM, MR. MASTERS?

POSITIVE! I SAW HIS FACE CLEARLY!

THAT'S ALL WE WANTED TO KNOW!



A FIGURE STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN AND NODDED! THE TWO PHONY F.B.I. MEN AND THE PHONY DOCTOR PULLED THEIR GUNS AND FIRED...



THE GRAND MASTER LOOKED DOWN AT THE DEAD NEWS-PAPERMAN... HIS PAPER 'LL MAKE TROUBLE FOR US... WHEN THEY FIND HIS BODY! BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG! THEY'LL COOL OFF! AND WITHOUT AN IDENTIFYING WITNESS... WE'RE SAFE!



YES...SAFE! SAFE BEHIND THEIR MASKS OF PREJUDICE, THESE HOODED PEDDLERS OF RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL HATRED OPERATE TODAY! MIND YOU, THEY ARE SHREWD AND RUTHLESS MEN SUCH AS THOSE IN OUR STORY! HOW LONG CAN WE STAY 'COOL' AND INDIFFERENT TO THIS THREAT TO OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE? IT IS TIME TO UNVEIL THESE USURPERS OF OUR CONSTITUTIONALLY GUARANTEED FREEDOMS!

THE WIND-UP TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION
YARN SHOULD GIVE YOU QUITE A JOLT...!

NOT SO TOUGH!



IT BEGAN WHEN LIEUTENANT ARDEN, THE ASTRO-NAVIGATOR, CAME TO THE ROCKET-SHIP COMMANDER...

WHAT? ARE YOU SURE? HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR FIGURES?

YES, SIR! WHEN WE CROSSED THE SEVENTH DEGREE AZIMUTH AND I STILL HADN'T SIGHTED TAUSARUS III, I CHECKED! WE'RE DEFINITELY LOST!



COMMANDER BERGMAN CURSED...

I'LL BUST YOU FOR THIS, ARDEN! I'LL SEE YOU SCRUBBING EXHAUST TUBES WHEN I GET THROUGH WITH YOU!

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I MADE MY MISTAKE, SIR! I'VE GONE BACK OVER MY COURSE CALCULATIONS A DOZEN TIMES...



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

I DON'T GIVE A HOOT WHERE YOU MADE YOUR STUPID ERROR...THE FACT IS, YOU MADE IT!

YES, SIR!



COMMANDER BERGMAN SNATCHED UP THE SHIP'S INTERCOM MIKE AND BARKED INTO IT...

ATTENTION! ATTENTION...ALL HANDS! REPORT TO THE CONTROL ROOM...IMMEDIATELY!

I'LL TRY TO BACK-TRACK, SIR... AND FIGURE OUR EXACT LOCATION!



NEVER MIND! ONE MISTAKE IS ENOUGH! YOU'RE THROUGH, ARDEN! WASHED UP!

BUT... SIR..



THE CREW OF THE ROCKET-SHIP FILED INTO THE CONTROL ROOM! COMMANDER BERGMAN LIT A CIGARETTE

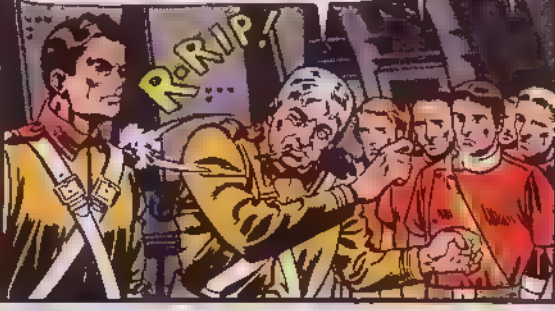
GENTLEMEN! LIEUTENANT ARDEN, HERE, WHAT? HOLY COW! HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT HE HAS MADE A SLIGHT ERROR IN THE CALCULATIONS FOR OUR COURSE SETTING... AND WE ARE NOW TRAVELING IN AN UNCHARTED SECTION OF OUR GALAXY!



THE STERN-FACED SHIP'S COMMANDER STEPPED FORWARD AND RIPPED LIEUTENANT HARDEN'S EPAULETS FROM HIS BLOUSE...

I HEREBY RELIEVE LIEUTENANT ARDEN OF HIS COMMISSION AND REDUCE HIM TO THE RANK OF ROCKET-MAN, THIRD CLASS!

GASP! NO!



THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP AND ITS CREW DEPENDS UPON THE JOBS PERFORMED BY EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THAT CREW! LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ALL OF YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MISTAKES! I'LL BUST ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO FALLS DOWN ON HIS JOB! SERGEANT COOGAN WILL TAKE OVER AS NAVIGATION OFFICER! THE REST OF YOU...DISMISSED!



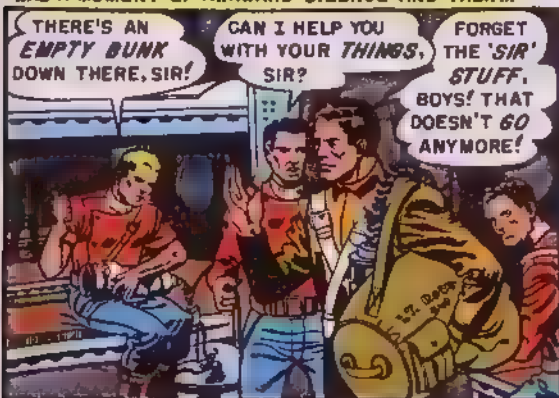
THE MEN FILED SILENTLY OUT OF THE CONTROL ROOM! THE DE-COMMISSIONED OFFICER HUNG HIS HEAD...BITING HIS LIPS...

WELL, ARDEN? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU KNOW WHERE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS ARE! REPORT THERE FOR DUTY!

Y-YES, SIR!



ROBERT ARDEN MOVED DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! INSIDE, THE NOISE OF BABBLING VOICES DIED SUD- DENLY AS ALL EYES TURNED TOWARD HIM! THERE WAS A MOMENT OF AWKWARD SILENCE AND THEN...

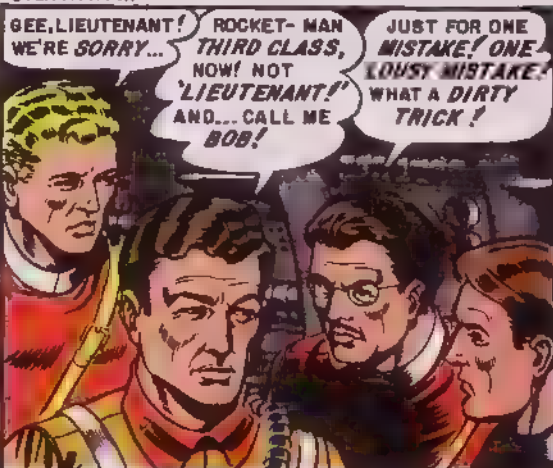


THERE'S AN **EMPTY BUNK** DOWN THERE, SIR!

CAN I HELP YOU WITH YOUR **THINGS**, SIR?

FORGET THE **'SIR'** STUFF. BOYS! THAT DOESN'T GO ANYMORE!

THEY CROWDED AROUND HIM, OFFERING THEIR SYMPATHY...



GEE, LIEUTENANT! WE'RE SORRY...

ROCKET-MAN **THIRD CLASS**, NOW! NOT **'LIEUTENANT!'** AND... CALL ME **BOB!**

JUST FOR ONE **MISTAKE! ONE LOUSY MISTAKE!** WHAT A DIRTY **TRICK!**



YOU **HEARD** THE OLD MAN! **ONE MISTAKE** COULD MEAN THE **SAFETY** OF THE SHIP AND THE CREW!

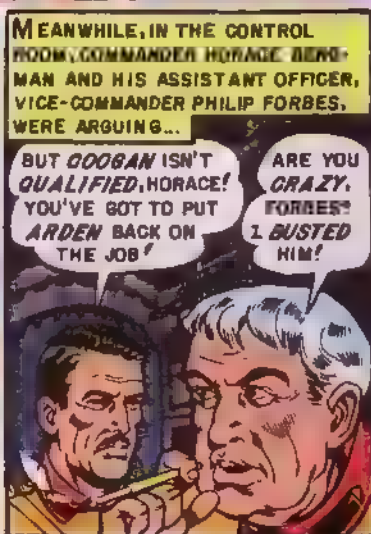
SURE, BOB! BUT EVEN THE **BEST** GUYS MAKE A **MISTAKE!** OKAY! BUT TO **BUST** YOU... RIGHT TO THE **BOTTOM!** THAT'S TOO **HARD...**



PERHAPS! THE COMMAND- ER'S A **HARD MAN!** BESIDES! WHAT HE **DIDN'T** TELL YOU IS... BECAUSE OF MY **ONE MISTAKE...** WE'RE **LOST!**

LOST!?

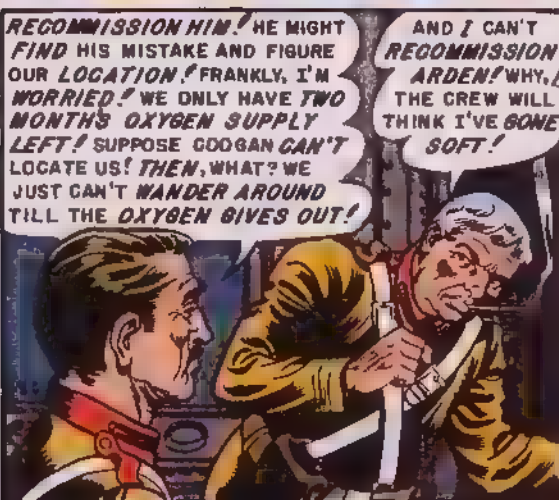
GEE!



MEANWHILE, IN THE CONTROL ROOM, COMMANDER HORACE BEND- MAN AND HIS ASSISTANT OFFICER, VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORBES, WERE ARGUING...

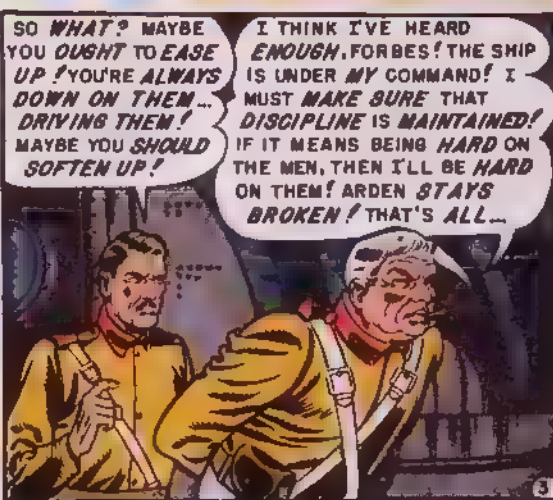
BUT **GOOGAN** ISN'T **QUALIFIED**, HORACE! YOU'VE GOT TO PUT **ARDEN** BACK ON THE **JOB!**

ARE YOU **CRAZY**, FORBES? I **BUSTED** HIM!



RECOMMISSION HIM! HE MIGHT **FIND** HIS **MISTAKE** AND **FIGURE** OUR **LOCATION!** FRANKLY, I'M **WORRIED!** WE ONLY HAVE **TWO MONTHS** **OXYGEN** **SUPPLY** **LEFT!** SUPPOSE **GOOGAN** CAN'T **LOCATE** US! THEN, WHAT? WE JUST CAN'T **WANDER** **AROUND** TILL THE **OXYGEN** **GIVES** **OUT!**

AND I CAN'T **RECOMMISSION** **ARDEN!** WHY, THE CREW WILL **THINK** I'VE GONE **SOFT!**



SO WHAT? MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO **EASE** **UP!** YOU'RE ALWAYS **DOWN** **ON THEM...** **DRIVING** **THEM!** MAYBE YOU SHOULD **SOFTEN** **UP!**

I THINK I'VE HEARD **ENOUGH**, FORBES! THE SHIP IS UNDER MY **COMMAND!** I MUST **MAKE** **SURE** THAT **DISCIPLINE** IS **MAINTAINED!** IF IT MEANS **BEING** **HARD** **ON** **THE** **MEN**, THEN I'LL BE **HARD** **ON** **THEM!** ARDEN **STAYS** **BROKEN!** THAT'S **ALL...**

VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORBES SLAMMED THE DOOR TO THE CONTROL ROOM AFTER HIM AND MUTTERED UNDER HIS BREATH...

SOMEDAY... BERGMAN! SOMEDAY YOU'LL SOFTEN UP!



AFTER ONE MONTH OF WANDERING... HOPELESSLY LOST... THROUGH THE VAST VOID OF THE UNCHARTED GALAXY, SERGEANT GOOGAN ANNOUNCED...

I'M SORRY, SIR! I'VE DONE MY BEST! I'VE CHECKED AND RECHECKED ARDEN'S FIGURES! I CAN'T FIND HIS MISTAKE! I CAN'T...



SERGEANT GOOGAN OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS AND CROSSED TO HIS BUNK! HE SAT DOWN, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS...

WHAT HAPPENED, HE... HE KICKED GOOGAN? ME OUT! I...

TRIED... BUT I COULDN'T DO IT! I COULDN'T FIND YOUR MISTAKE! SO HE BUSTED ME!



AND THEN, THE COMMANDER ANNOUNCED...

WE HAVE LESS THAN ONE MONTH'S SUPPLY OF OXYGEN LEFT! STARTING TODAY, WE'RE CUTTING DOWN UNTIL WE CAN REPLENISH OUR SUPPLY! WE WILL BE USING THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NEEDED TO SUSTAIN LIFE! YOU WILL LIMIT YOURSELVES TO ONLY ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES...



IT WAS A WEEK LATER... A WEEK OF GASPING FOR EACH BREATH... WHEN GOOGAN SUDDENLY BROKE DOWN...

WE'RE GOING TO DIE! WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

GOOGAN! TAKE IT EASY!



THE POOR MAN COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL! HE RAVED HYSTERICALLY UNTIL HE FELL BACK ONTO HIS BUNK CHOKING...

COUGH...COUGH... GASP...

HE NEEDS AIR! GET AN OXY-BOTTLE UP HERE!

WHAT'S GOING ON?



IT'S GOOGAN, SIR! HE'S HAD A BREAKDOWN! HE NEEDS AIR! HE'S CHOKING! I SENT SEELEY FOR AN OXY-BOTTLE!

NEVER MIND! WE NEED EVERY DROP OF OXYGEN LEFT ON BOARD! WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE IT ON ONE MAN...



THEY WATCHED GOOGAN WRITHE IN HIS HYSTERICAL CONTORTIONS GASPING FOR AIR! FINALLY...

HE...HE'S DEAD!

YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIM!

I'M INTERESTED ONLY IN SAVING THIS SHIP AND ITS CREW...ALL OF YOU!

EX-LIEUTENANT ARDEN'S FACE FLUSHED CRIMSON! HE SCREAMED AT THE COMMANDER...

HOW COULD YOU BE LIKE THAT? HOW COULD YOU BE SO HARD-HEARTED? YOU...YOU MURDERED HIM!

ROCKET-MAN ARDEN! I SUGGEST THAT YOU CALM DOWN!

BUT ROCKET-MAN ARDEN *DIDN'T* CALM DOWN! HIS EYES BULGED AS HE SCREECHED AT THE COMMANDER...

MURDERER! MURDERER!

ARDEN!



ROBERT ARDEN PITCHED FORWARD...FACE DOWNWARD...DEAD! THE OTHERS OF THE CREW STARED AT HIM! THE COMMANDER BARKED AN ORDER...

JETTISON THESE TWO BODIES AT ONCE! ANY MORE OUTBURSTS OF THIS KIND WILL BE DEALT WITH THE SAME WAY!



COMMANDER BERGMAN STALKED OUT OF THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! VICE-COMMANDER FORBES STARED AFTER HIM...

WHAT MAKES HIM THAT WAY, SIR? WHAT MAKES HIM SO...SO...

HARD, SEELEY? I DON'T KNOW! BUT SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY HE'LL CHANGE!



THE SHIP WAS ON ITS LAST OXY-BOTTLE WHEN IT ENTERED THE STRANGE SOLAR SYSTEM...

LOOK, SIR! THAT HUGE PLANET! CLOUDS! COVERED WITH CLOUDS! DO YOU THINK...?

OXYGEN ATMOSPHERE! LOOK AT THESE SPECTRO-GRAPH READINGS! WE CAN REPLENISH OUR SUPPLY!

ATTENTION, ALL HANDS! PREPARE FOR LANDING! PREPARE FOR LANDING!



THE SHIP NOSED IN TOWARD THE
HUGE PLANET! FASTER AND
FASTER IT FELL...

SWING 'ER
AROUND! BLAST
OFF! WE'RE
BEING SUCKED
IN TOO FAST!

SHE'S GOT A
TREMENDOUS
GRAVITATIONAL
PULL!



THE REAR ROCKET-TUBES BEGAN
TO FIRE...SLOWING THE SPACE-
CRAFT'S DESCENT...

WE'RE STILL
GOING IN
TOO FAST!

MORE
POWER!
MORE
POWER!



THE G-PULL! IT'S
TOO STRONG!
WE'LL NEVER
BE ABLE TO
STAND IT!

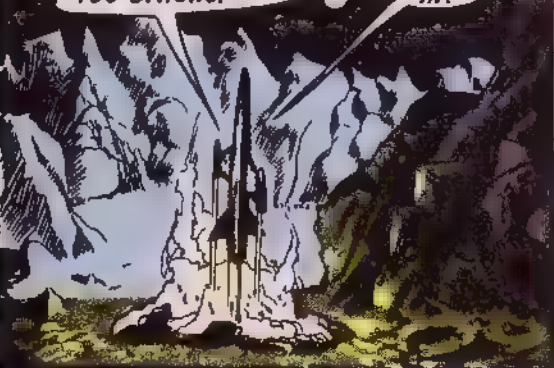
FULL POWER!
WE'RE GETTING
OUT OF HERE!



FULL POWER WAS APPLIED! BUT...

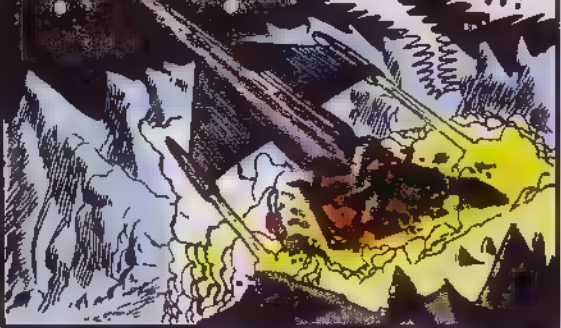
IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T GET
BACK UP! THE G-PULL IS
TOO STRONG!

WE'RE
GOING
IN!



EVEN WITH FULL POWER ON, THE SHIP SMASHED TO
THE PLANET'S SURFACE HEAVILY...

YAAAAAAGGGH!



INSIDE, ON HIS SHOCK COUCH, COMMANDER BERGMAN
TRIED TO LIFT HIS HEAD...TRIED TO MOVE HIS ARMS!
IT WAS AS IF HE WERE BEING HELD DOWN BY THOU-
SANDS OF POUNDS OF WEIGHT...

UUUNNNNNNNNNNGG!



AND THEN HIS BODY...A BODY NOT ABLE TO WITH-
STAND SUCH A GRAVITATIONAL PULL... JUST
SEEMED TO MELT... SPREADING OUT IN A RED PULPY
POOL OF OOZE...



YES! COMMANDER HORACE BERGMAN HAD FINALLY
GONE SOFT!

THE END

FOR SHEER, STARK HORROR, READ THIS TERRIFYING TALE...
GUARANTEED TO JAR YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT!

SUGAR 'N' SPICE 'N'

THEY WERE OUT THERE AGAIN... THE KIDS FROM DOWN THE BLOCK... JOHNNY AND MARGARET! I COULD HEAR THEIR CHILDISH HIGH-PITCHED VOICES SQUEELING! I PEERED THROUGH THE CURTAINS AT THEM! JOHNNY WAS THE OLDER OF THE TWO... ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN! MARGIE, HIS YOUNGER SISTER, WAS NO MORE THAN EIGHT! THE BRIGHTLY COLORED BALL THEY'D BEEN PLAYING CATCH WITH BOUNCED OUT OF THE LITTLE GIRL'S HANDS AND LEAPED OVER THE PICKET FENCE INTO MY FRONT YARD...

CATCH IT, MARGIE!
CATCH IT! OH...

IT... IT WENT
INTO HER
GARDEN!
GOLLY!

I AM AN OLD WOMAN! CHILDREN ALWAYS SEEM TO BE *FRIGHTENED* OF OLD WOMEN! MARGIE AND JOHNNY WERE *ESPECIALLY* FRIGHTENED OF *ME*! THEY CALLED ME THE 'OLD GRAB'! I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE I WAS ALWAYS CHASING THEM FROM IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE...

WHAT'LL WE
DO?

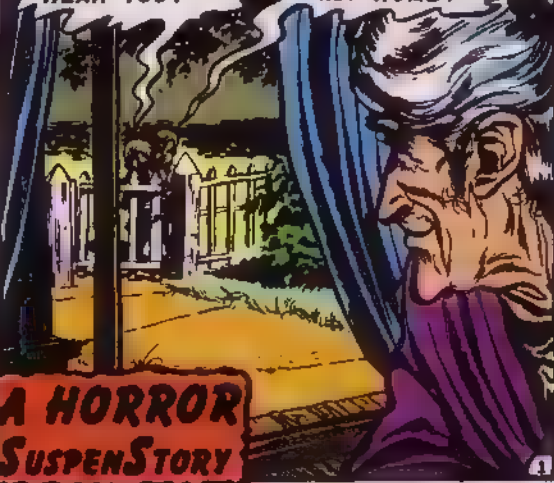
WE'VE GOT TO *GET* IT! IT'S
OUR *NEW* BALL! MOMMY'LL
BE *ANGRY* WITH US IF WE
LOSE IT!



THE BOY LOOKED AROUND, STARING AT THE HOUSE! I STEPPED BACK FROM THE CURTAINED WINDOW SO HE WOULDN'T SEE ME WATCHING HIM! HE TIP TOED TOWARD THE GATE AND TRIPPED THE LATCH! IT SWUNG OPEN, SQUEAKING ON ITS RUSTY HINGES...

SH-H-H-H-H! SHE'LL
HEAR YOU!

WAYNE... WAYNE SHE'S
NOT HOME!



A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY

JOHNNY WAITED A MOMENT, STUDYING THE HOUSE FOR A SIGN OF LIFE! I STEPPED FURTHER BACK INTO THE SHADOWS! HE STARTED TO TIP-TOE UP THE WALK...

YOU KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR HER, MARGIE!

HURRY, JOHNNY! HURRY!

THEY WERE SO CUTE! I WANTED TO EAT THEM UP! JOHNNY CREEPT TOWARD THE BALL! I WENT TO THE FRONT DOOR AND...AS HIS TINY, LITTLE, PUDGY FINGERS CLOSED AROUND THE BRIGHTLY COLORED SPHERE...FLUNG IT OPEN...

SO!

GULP!

JOHNNY! IT'S HER!

I STEPPED OUT ONTO THE PORCH, PUTTING ON MY VERY ANGRIEST LOOK! I COULD SEE HIS WIDE EYES FILLING WITH TEARS! MY GRUFF VOICE EVEN SURPRISED ME...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY GARDEN?

M-M-MY BALL! I...I... RUN!

I STARTED DOWN THE STEPS SLOWLY! FOR A MOMENT, JOHNNY STOOD FROZEN IN FEAR! MARGIE STARTED TO CRY! SHE SOBBED OUT ANOTHER WARNING...

RUN, JOHNNY! SOB... SOB... RUN!

JOHNNY TOOK A FLEETING LOOK AT HIS PRECIOUS RUBBER BALL AND DARTED OUT OF THE YARD...

AND DON'T YOU EVER COME IN HERE AGAIN! NEXT TIME, I'LL...

Y'OLD CRAB! NYAAA! SOUR PUSS!

I HAD TO TURN AWAY FROM THEM SO THEY WOULDN'T SEE ME SMILING! THEY CERTAINLY HAD SPIRIT, THOSE TWO! I LIKE KIDS WITH SPIRIT! I BENT AND PICKED UP THEIR BALL! THEY STOPPED RUNNING AND WATCHED...

HEY! YOU GIVE US BACK OUR BALL OR WE'LL TELL OUR DADDY!

HERE! COME AND GET IT!

JOHNNY'S FACE TURNED WHITE! MARGIE HID BEHIND HIM! THEY CONTEMPLATED MY OFFER...

UH-UH! YOU THROW IT TO US!

YEAH! THROW IT... ALL RIGHT... IF YOU DON'T WANT IT...

I TURNED TOWARD THE PORCH, CARRYING THE BALL! I WATCHED THEM OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE! THEY WERE WHISPERING TOGETHER...

SHE'S TAKING IT INSIDE WITH HER!

MOMMY TOLD US NOT TO PLAY IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE! SHE'LL SAY IT SERVED US RIGHT!

I CLIMBED THE STEPS SLOWLY... GIVING THEM TIME TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS...

AIN'T...AIN'T YUH GONNA...GIVE US OUR BALL BACK?

COME AND GET IT, IF YOU WANT IT!

JOHNNY SHUFFLED ACROSS THE STREET HESITANTLY! MARGIE STOOD SILENTLY, BITING HER FINGERNAILS...

BOTH OF YOU!

C'MON... GULP... MARGIE!

N-NO! I'M... I'M SCARED OF HER!

JOHNNY BEGGED MARGIE TO COME WITH HIM, BUT SHE REFUSED! FINALLY, SHE FLED DOWN THE STREET, CRYING...

NO! SOB! NO! I'M SOB... SCARED!

MARGIE! WAIT!

JOHNNY STARTED AFTER HER! HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE BALL! I TOSSED IT AT HIM AND CALLED...

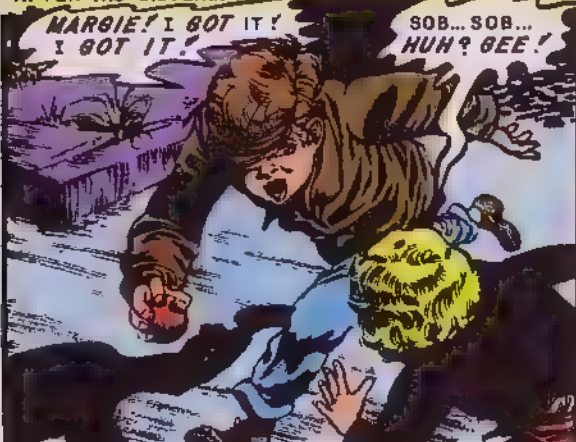
HERE! HERE'S YOUR OLD BALL! NOW, STAY OUT OF MY YARD! IN FACT... STAY AWAY FROM IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE!

GULP!

JOHNNY CAUGHT THE BALL AND SCAMPERED AWAY AFTER HIS SISTER...

I WATCHED THEM FOR A WHILE, AND THEN TURNED BACK INTO THE HOUSE...

LITTLE DEVILS! I'LL GET 'EM YET!



MARGIE! I GOT IT! I GOT IT!

SOB... SOB... HUH? GEE!

THAT'S THE WAY IT HAD BEEN EVER SINCE I'D MOVED INTO THAT OLD HOUSE! I'D BEEN AFTER THOSE TWO IMPS EVER SINCE THE VERY FIRST DAY! AS I WENT BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND SLAMMED THE DOOR, SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE! ON THE WALL...THE CALENDAR...

OCTOBER THIRTIETH! HMMM!
TOMORROW'S THE THIRTY-FIRST!
THAT MEANS...TOMORROW NIGHT
IS...

OCTOBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

I SPENT THE NEXT DAY GETTING READY FOR HALLOWEEN! EVERY ONCE AND A WHILE, I PEEPED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND WATCHED THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK SWINGING THOSE OLD SILK STOCKINGS FILLED WITH FLOUR...

HALLOWEEN!

HALLOWEEN!

I LISTENED TO THE RUSTY GATE SQUEAK OPEN AS JOHNNY CREEPT UP THE WALK...



...AND PLACED THE FILLED MILK BOTTLE ON THE DOOR STEP, LEANING AGAINST THE DOOR... SO THAT WHEN I'D OPEN IT, IT WOULD TIP IN AND SPILL ALL OVER THE FOYER...



LITTLE MARGIE AND JOHNNY PROBABLY THOUGHT OF IT THE EXACT SAME MOMENT THAT I DID...

HALLOWEEN!?

YEAH! T'MORROW NIGHT!

IT'S OUR CHANCE TO GET EVEN WITH THAT OLD CRAB!



BY EVENING, EVERYTHING WAS READY! I WAS SET FOR THEM! AND THEY DIDN'T DISAPPOINT ME! WHEN DARKNESS FELL, I SPIED LITTLE JOHNNY AND MARGIE STEALING UP TO THE FRONT GATE...

GOT THE MILK BOTTLE FILLED WITH WATER?

UH-HUH! BUT YOU'RE GONNA DO IT! I'M SCARED!



THEN HE RANG THE BELL...



NATURALLY, I DIDN'T ANSWER! I JUST PEEKED OUT... WATCHING THEM WHISPER TOGETHER...

SHE PROBABLY *KNOWS* IT'S JUST *KIDS* RINGING THE BELL! WE'VE GOT TO GET HER TO *OPEN THE DOOR*!

WHAT ABOUT *TICK-TACK-TOE*?



EVERYBODY HAS A DIFFERENT NAME FOR *THAT* HALLOWEEN TRICK! JOHNNY AND MARGIE CALLED IT 'TICK-TACK-TOE'! JOHNNY SLIPPED BACK UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND PUSHED A THUMB-TACK INTO IT! FROM THE TACK, HE HUNG A LENGTH OF THREAD WITH A NUT TIED AT THE END...

SH-H-H-H! STOP *GIGGLING*!

TEE-HEE! I... TEE-HEE... CAN'T HELP IT!

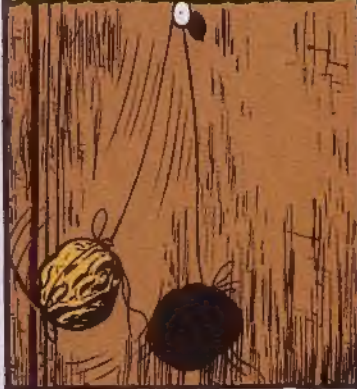


THEN, TIED TO THE NUT, THE BOY UNROLLED A SPOOL OF BLACK THREAD TILL IT STRETCHED BACK DOWN TO BEYOND THE GATE!

ALL SET? *YEAH! DUCK DOWN!*

JOHNNY PULLED ON THE LONG THREAD FROM THE NUT! THEN HE LET IT GO FORWARD! THE NUT, HANGING FROM THE TACK, RAPPED AGAINST THE DOOR...

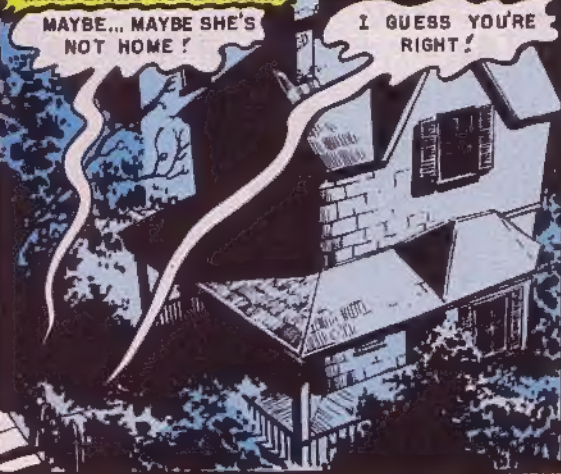
AGAIN AND AGAIN HE PULLED THE NUT BACK AND LET IT RAM AGAINST THE DOOR! ANYONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS HALLOWEEN PRANK WOULD GO *CRAZY* LISTENING TO THAT INCESSANT TAPPING! BUT I JUST WAITED...



FINALLY, JOHNNY GAVE UP! I COULD SEE THEM WHISPERING TOGETHER...

MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'S NOT HOME!

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT!



I WATCHED THEM START AWAY... DOWN THE BLOCK... DISAPPOINTED! NOW IT WAS *MY* CHANCE...

H-HELP!

HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?





**SOMEONE
HELP ME...**

**IT'S THE
OLD
CRAB!
GASP!**

**JOHNNY! I'M
SCARED!**



**MAYBE SHE'S SICK?
MAYBE SHE'S
DYING!**

H-E-C-L-P!



**LITTLE JOHNNY STARTED BACK
TOWARD MY HOUSE! I CALLED
OUT ONCE MORE...**

**HELP ME...
SOMEONE!**

**JOHNNY! C'MON!
WHERE
YUH
GOIN'?**



**JOHNNY SKIPPED UP THE PORCH
STEPS AND REMOVED THE TILTED
MILK BOTTLE...**

**YOU ALL RIGHT, HELP
MA'AM? ME...
PLEASE!**



**HE TRIED THE FRONT DOOR! IT WAS
UNLOCKED! I SAW THEIR FRIGHTENED
FACES PEER IN...**

**IT...IT'S DARK
IN THERE,
JOHNNY!**

**MA'AM?
YOU
OKAY?**

MOANN!



**THEY STEPPED INSIDE! THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT
BEHIND THEM...**

GASP!

HUH?



**JOHNNY! IT...IT'S
LOCKED!**

**PULL, MARGIE!
PULL!**

THE DOOR KNOB CAME OFF IN THE BOY'S HANDS...

IT...IT
BROKE!

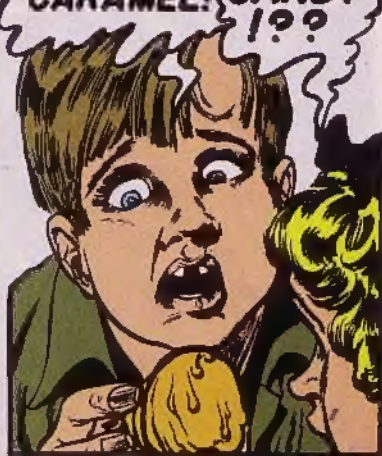
NOW WE'LL
NEVER GET
OUT OF HERE!

THE HEAT FROM JOHNNY'S HAND
HAD ITS EFFECT...

IT'S...IT'S STICKY! WHAT?!

JOHNNY STARED DOWN AT THE
BROKEN KNOB...

IT'S CANDY!
CARAMEL! CANDY
!??



THE TWO CHILDREN LOOKED AROUND HORRIFIED!
THEN THEY SAW... IN THE FIRE-GLOW...

LOOK! CANDY-GANE
CHAIRS!

CHOCOLATE
TABLES!

I OPENED THE DOOR A LITTLE FURTHER! THE GLOW
ILLUMINATED MORE OF THE ROOM...

SPUN-SUGAR
LAMPS!

GINGER-BREAD
WALLS!

HEH!
HEH!



AND THEN, I FLUNG THE OVEN DOOR OPEN ALL THE WAY!
THEY SAW ME... AS I REALLY AM... A WITCH!

WELCOME, JOHN...
AND MARGARET!

HANSEL!
GRETEL!

YOU SEE... JOHN... IN GERMAN... IS HANS, OR
HANSEL! MARGARET IS GRETA... OR
GRETEL! DID HANSEL AND GRETEL
GET AWAY FROM ME AS THEY
DID IN THE ORIGINAL STORY,
YOU ASK? COME, NOW!
REMEMBER! THIS IS AN
E.C. MAGAZINE!



THE
END...